United Nations A/56/378–S/2001/890

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
19 September 2001
English
Original: French

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 75 (a)
Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 14 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the sixteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was held from 13 to 17 August 2001 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (see annex).

The meeting made important recommendations and agreed on a programme of work for the Committee for the period 2001-2002; these require the support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I should be very grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 75 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Atoki **Ileka**
Permanent Representative
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 14 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the sixteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

(Kinshasa, 13-17 August 2001)

Introduction

The sixteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Kinshasa from 13 to 17 August 2001.

The following member States took part in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

Rwanda did not attend.

Representatives of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) also participated in the work.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by Mr. Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- A statement by H.E. Mr. Nelson Cosme, Deputy-Secretary-General of ECCAS;
- The opening address by H.E. Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, presided over the closing ceremony.

Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau by its Chairman.
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.
5. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa.
6. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.
   (a) Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);
   (b) Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa;
   (c) Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa;
   (d) Establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.
7. Briefing on the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.
8. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa.
9. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa.

10. Organization of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts.

11. Consideration of the draft resolution on the activities of the Advisory Committee.

12. Programme of work for the period 2001-2002.

13. Date of the next meeting.

14. Other matters.

15. Adoption of the report of the sixteenth ministerial meeting.

Conduct of work

I. Election of the Bureau

The Committee elected a Bureau composed as follows: Chairman: Democratic Republic of the Congo; First Vice-Chairman: Central African Republic; Second Vice-Chairman: Equatorial Guinea; Rapporteur: Republic of the Congo.

II. Report of the outgoing Bureau

The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau presented by H.E. Mr. Sévérin Ntahomvukiye, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi, Chairman of the Bureau.

The Committee welcomed the energetic and effective way in which the Bureau had discharged the mandates entrusted to it by the fourteenth ministerial meeting with regard, in particular, to the raising of awareness among the countries of the subregion concerning the importance of signing and/or ratifying the Non-Aggression Pact, the Mutual Assistance Pact and the Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX); the organization of the fifteenth and sixteenth ministerial meetings; the preparations for the conference on the protection of women and children in armed conflict and the steps taken with a view to the effective launching of COPAX; and the establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

III. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

Angola

The Committee learned with consternation of the recent tragedy that had struck the Angolan people following UNITA's attack on a passenger train, in which hundreds of people were killed.

It associated itself with the mourning of the Angolan people in their time of sorrow and extended to them its heartfelt condolences.

The Committee expressed concern at the continuing conflict in Angola especially owing to the repeated attacks by the União Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA) and their tragic consequences for peace, security, stability, and development in Angola and for the well-being of its peoples.

It expressed support for the efforts of the Government of Angola to restore peace, security and stability throughout the territory and to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

It called on the international community to assist the displaced persons.

It invited UNITA to renounce the pursuit of war and instead promote national reconciliation and peace for the benefit of all Angolans under the terms of the Lusaka Protocol.

The Committee called on all Central African countries to comply strictly with the sanctions imposed on UNITA by the United Nations Security Council.

Burundi

The Committee expressed deep concern at the heightened insecurity in Burundi and, in particular, at the continuation and escalation of the violence being perpetrated against civilian populations in that country by armed groups based in some neighbouring countries.

It welcomed the recent signing of an agreement on transitional leadership which gives grounds for real hope about the development of the situation in Burundi.

It expressed its support for the efforts of the Burundian Government and all Burundians to bring about a lasting peace in their country.

The Committee paid tribute to the efforts being made by the Facilitator, H.E. Mr. Nelson Mandela, and the heads of State of some members of the Advisory Committee to bring peace to Burundi, and it encouraged them to continue these efforts in the context of the Arusha process.

It invited the countries of the Central African subregion, particularly those of the Great Lakes region, to help the Burundians restore peace through dialogue and reconciliation and to refrain from providing any direct or indirect assistance to the rebels.

The Committee addressed a solemn appeal to all armed movements to turn in their weapons immediately and to join in the Arusha process and engage in negotiations for a total and permanent ceasefire.

It urged all Burundian parties to endeavour to promote national reconciliation and restoration of peace in Burundi, in order to facilitate full implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community to provide substantial support for the peace efforts in Burundi, especially through more effective and committed cooperation.

Cameroon

The Committee paid tribute to the consolidation of a climate of peace and stability in Cameroon.

It welcomed the Cameroonian Government's pursuit of a policy of dialogue in the context of the establishment of a consensus-based democracy that will promote the country's harmonious development.

The Committee welcomed the Cameroonian Government's efforts to continue its campaign against crime and organized crime and to consolidate the gains in respect of human rights.

It was informed of the progress of the investigations of the commission of inquiry set up by the Cameroonian Government to investigate the case of the alleged disappearance of nine persons in Bépanda and of the disciplinary and judicial proceedings instituted against the accused.

It welcomed the Government of Cameroon's policy of good-neighbourliness towards the other countries of the subregion.

The Committee again expressed deep concern at the information provided by the delegation of Cameroon on the persistent attempts at infiltration and repeated acts of provocation by Nigerian forces on the Bakassi peninsula and other border points and again called on the two parties to refrain from any action that could heighten tensions pending the decision of the International Court of Justice, which Cameroon had seized of the matter.

The Committee, in addition to reiterating its appeal to the international community and friendly countries to assist in maintaining the peace between Cameroon and Nigeria while awaiting the verdict of the International Court of Justice, requested the Court to take the necessary steps to ensure a rapid conclusion of the proceedings pending before it.

The Committee again urged Nigeria to comply strictly with the interim measures of protection laid down by the Court in its ruling of 15 March 1996 and called upon the two parties to refrain from taking any action that could create difficulties for the application of the final judgement of the Court.

Congo

The Committee welcomed the positive developments in the situation in the Congo, marked inter alia by a tremendous improvement in the overall peace and security situation, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the continued collection of military weapons, demobilization and reintegration of former militia members and the resumption of economic and commercial activities in all the smaller towns from which the population had previously fled.

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Congolese Government to promote national reconciliation in that country and, in particular, the holding in Brazzaville, from March to April 2001, of the all-embracing national dialogue in which all elements of national life participated.

It expressed its appreciation for the smooth handling of the administrative assessment and invited all political actors to set about calmly to resume the ongoing democratic process.

The Committee expressed deep concern at the situation created in several regions of the country due to the huge influx of refugees from neighbouring countries and the adverse consequences this has had at the security, economic, social and environmental level. It urgently appealed to the international community to provide substantial and swift support to the Congo in order to help it deal with that situation.

Gabon

The Committee noted with appreciation the climate of peace and political stability in the Gabonese Republic.

It welcomed the holding in Libreville, from 25 July to 1 August 2001, of the tripartite meeting among Gabon, the Congo and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which led, inter alia, to voluntary repatriation of a first wave of Congolese refugees from Gabon and encouraged the parties involved to continue their efforts to complete the matter.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability in Equatorial Guinea.

It noted with satisfaction the continuation of the democratic process in Equatorial Guinea.

Central African Republic

The Committee expressed grave concern at recent events in the Central African Republic and, in particular, at the attempted coup of last May, which claimed many lives and caused significant displacement of the population.

It took note of the reports concerning the presence in the Central African Republic of many refugees from neighbouring countries and of the security problems that this creates for the host country.

It welcomed the return to calm in that country and noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the Central African Government to fight insecurity and to continue the process of restructuring the armed forces and disarmament.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee expressed grave concern at the continued infringements of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It commended the efforts made by President Joseph Kabila to implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in order to safeguard respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee asked the parties which have not yet done so to complete their withdrawal to the new defensive positions in accordance with the Kampala plan and the Harare sub-plans for disengagement and redeployment.

The Committee asked all countries whose troops are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make appropriate necessary arrangements for a prompt, complete and orderly withdrawal in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, so as to restore the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of that country.

It asked all parties involved to make all necessary arrangements with a view to achieving the prompt demilitarization of the town of Kisangani in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

It urgently appealed to the Security Council to move ahead as soon as possible with the implementation of phase 3 of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee expressed its grave concern at the continued systematic plundering and unlawful exploitation of natural resources and other riches in the occupied part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and demanded the immediate cessation of these practices.

It expressed deep concern at the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated in the occupied part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee welcomed the prospect of the impending start of the preparatory meeting of the inter-Congolese dialogue and urgently appealed to all

Congolese parties to cooperate fully with the Facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, and to participate actively in that dialogue in a spirit of tolerance and compromise.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community to continue its support for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to provide substantial assistance to the people affected by the war.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability in Sao Tome and Principe and the strengthening of the democratic process as reflected in the recent presidential elections which were won by H.E. Mr. Fradrique Melo Bandeira de Menezes.

It noted with satisfaction that the recent signing of an agreement for the exploitation of the country's oil resources may help the economy to pick up.

Chad

The Committee took note of the information provided by the delegation of Chad regarding the smooth operation of the presidential elections in Chad.

It welcomed the re-election of H.E. Mr. Idriss Deby as President of Chad and his determination to make national reconciliation and the prospect of peaceful change in Chad through consolidation of the democratic process, poverty eradication and development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation the central theme of his new mandate.

It noted with satisfaction the Chadian security forces' successes in their campaign against armed "roadblockers" and organized crime in the cities, together with the positive results of the Government's efforts to ease tensions between livestock owners and farmers.

It expressed concern at the continuing attacks by the armed opposition and encouraged the Chadian authorities to pursue their policy of dialogue and openness towards the opposition in order to bring about national reconciliation among all Chadians.

It called on all parties in Chad to respond positively to this spirit of openness and to give priority attention to reconciliation so as to protect the best interests of the Chadian people.

IV. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the intensification of actions and initiatives taken by the member countries within the framework of cooperation in security matters, aimed, in particular, at lessening tensions, combating insecurity in the border areas and facilitating exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

In view of the cross-border nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and the need to respond to them in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee again strongly recommended continued cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

The Committee particularly welcomed:

- The cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola in the training of members of the Congolese national police;
- The organization of joint patrols at the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo, which has made it possible to restore navigation on the Congo River and to provide security to the riparian population;
- The visit to Brazzaville by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, which enabled him to discuss security issues in the subregion with his Congolese counterparts;
- The tripartite consultations among Angola, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The training of members of the police forces of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad at the national police academy in Yaoundé;
- The cooperation between the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo, which resulted, in particular, in the repatriation of refugees from the Congo;
- The meeting between the defence and security authorities of Burundi and their counterparts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- The success achieved through cooperation between the police forces of Cameroon and the Central African Republic, particularly in combating cross-border vehicle thefts;
- The cooperation between Cameroon and the Central African Republic in the training of officers of the armed forces of the Central African Republic, the police, the gendarmerie and customs officials;
- The consultations held between the administrative and military authorities of the Central African Republic and their counterparts in Cameroon to dispel misunderstandings and tensions among the peoples of the border areas;
- The consultations held between the authorities of Cameroon and Chad, which resulted in the voluntary repatriation of more than 500 Chadian refugees;
- The joint operations carried out by Chad and Cameroon to recover the wreckage of a Cameroonian military aircraft that had crashed in Chadian territory;
- The signing of agreements between Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon and between Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea on the delimitation of maritime boundaries;
- The organization of joint border patrols by the security forces of the Central African countries;
- The coordination meetings between the administrative and military authorities of the border areas to dispel tensions among the population and build confidence;
- The summit meetings on security questions held by the Central African countries at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

The Committee expressed its deep concern with regard to the upsurge in organized crime and insecurity in the countries of the subregion, particularly the development of the phenomenon of roadblocks. It recommended the intensification of information exchange and the organization of large-scale joint operations to combat this scourge. It recommended that a high-level meeting should be held on the question, aimed, in particular, at setting up a suitable legal framework for cooperation in the matter.

It stressed the need for closer cooperation among the security services of the various countries with a view to combating the cross-border trade in stolen vehicles.

Recalling the importance to the subregion's peace and security of the protocol relating to the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and the Mutual Assistance Pact concluded in Malabo in February 2000 among the countries of Central Africa, the Committee recommended that the Bureau should draw the attention of those countries which had not already done so to the need to sign and/or ratify those instruments.

Aware of the need to strengthen cooperation for peace and security in the subregion, the Committee appealed to those countries that had not yet signed the agreement on criminal police cooperation, adopted in April 1999 at the meeting of the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs in Yaoundé, to take all necessary steps to expedite the signing of this text and to guarantee its full effectiveness.

V. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee

A. Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX)

The Committee welcomed the information provided by the Deputy Secretary-General ECCAS concerning the status of ratification of the instruments governing COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact, and particularly the ratification of these two instruments by Cameroon, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. He asked those countries to transmit the relevant instruments of ratification to the depositary country, Gabon, and urged countries that had not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify those legal instruments before the next ministerial meeting.

With respect to the early warning mechanism, the Committee was also informed of the completion of the refurbishing of the building made available to ECCAS by the Gabonese Government.

It noted with satisfaction that the Gabonese Government had established a budget line to cover some of the operating costs of the mechanism.

It welcomed the contacts currently under way between ECCAS and the Gabonese Government with a view to the forthcoming operationalization of the early warning mechanism.

B. Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa

The Committee reiterated its interest in organizing joint military exercises.

It repeated its recommendation that a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the Central African countries should be convened in order to review the Biyongho-98 exercise, revise its costs downwards and determine the division of contributions among the various countries.

The Committee noted the offer made by the Government of the Gabonese Republic to host the meeting in October 2001, on a date to be determined.

It asked the Gabonese Government to provide the Committee secretariat with a proposed budget for the organization of the meeting.

A mandate was given to the Bureau to take all the necessary steps, in conjunction with the Committee secretariat, ECCAS and the Gabonese Government, for the organization of the meeting.

C. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa

The Committee noted with satisfaction that work had begun on the construction of the building that was to house the subregional parliament.

The Committee was informed of the continuing contacts between the ECCAS secretariat and the various member countries concerning the setting up of the network of parliamentarians established in Malabo on 24 June 2000.

It also noted with satisfaction information on the adoption of instruments governing the organization and functioning of the network of parliamentarians.

A mandate was given to the Bureau of the Committee to continue to follow developments and to report on them at the next meeting.

Members were reminded that the protocol setting up the network of parliamentarians had been adopted in November 2000.

D. Establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

The Committee congratulated the Cameroonian Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ECCAS secretariat on their combined efforts for the effective establishment of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa.

It took note of information on the continued activities of the Centre under the supervision of the project coordinator appointed to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Committee welcomed the high-level contacts maintained by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Cameroon with a view to making further progress in this area.

It was informed that a meeting of experts to review the draft documents governing the organization and functioning of the Centre had been held in Libreville from 2 to 5 July 2001. It considered and took note of the report of that meeting, and congratulated the experts on the quality of their work.

VI. Briefing on the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Committee noted with interest the briefing given by Mr. Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, expert from the Committee secretariat, on the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001.

It welcomed the information on the conduct of the Conference and on the content of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted at the end of the Conference.

It also welcomed the incorporation in the Programme of Action of many of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena in October 1999, and of the concerns set forth in the Bamako Declaration regarding the common African position on the proliferation, circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

Nonetheless, it regretted that not all the concerns expressed by African delegations at the Conference had been taken into account in the Programme of Action, and hoped that future reviews of those issues would result in further progress.

The Committee urged the member countries to take the necessary steps to implement the Programme of Action in their respective territories and to devise projects that could benefit from the international assistance provided for in the Programme of Action to deal with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which particularly affected the Central African subregion.

VII. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa

After reviewing the recommendations formulated by the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena from 25 to 27 October 1999, the Committee noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the countries of the subregion to implement them.

In particular, it welcomed the operations to disarm persons illegally possessing firearms, the operations to collect weapons in the hands of the population, particularly in countries emerging from conflict, the demobilization and disarmament of former combatants, the organization of campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of firearms, the establishment in the various member countries of appropriate legislation governing the trade and ownership of firearms and the activities of private security firms, the strengthening of border controls, the organization of operations for the collection and destruction of weapons and measures taken to combat organized crime and roadblocks.

The Committee also welcomed the organization in Brazzaville, on 14 April 2001, of a public ceremony for the destruction of weapons of war, known as the "flame of peace", and encouraged the other countries of the subregion dealing with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to hold such ceremonies, in view of their significant psychological impact.

The Committee recommended that the member countries should intensify their efforts to implement the recommendations of the Conference and more generally to step up the struggle against the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, bearing in mind the dangers posed by this scourge to the peace, security, stability and development of the subregion.

VIII. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa

After reviewing the recommendations formulated by the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa, held in Bujumbura from 14 to 16 August 2000, the Committee welcomed the efforts made by the countries of the subregion to implement them.

The Committee also noted with appreciation the establishment in several member countries of institutional structures responsible for the management of issues relating to refugees and the efforts made by the authorities of the countries of asylum to promote the voluntary repatriation of refugees in collaboration with the refugees' countries of origin and the competent international agencies, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It expressed concern about the indication, by several delegations, that the inflow of refugees from

neighbouring countries was jeopardizing their countries' security and stability.

It asked all the countries of the subregion to comply with international norms governing the acceptance and management of refugees, particularly the obligation to disarm them and to settle them at a reasonable distance from the border of their country of origin.

It encouraged all the countries of the subregion to continue their efforts to alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced persons in their territories while respecting the relevant international norms.

The Committee made an urgent appeal to the international community and, in particular, the United Nations specialized agencies to provide greater support to the many refugees and displaced persons in Central Africa, and to the countries of asylum.

IX. Organization of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts

The Committee noted with interest the explanations provided by Ms. Pamela Maponga, Secretary of the Committee, on the status of preparations for the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts.

It decided to hold the Conference in the first half of November 2001, on a date to be determined, and welcomed the reaffirmation, by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of its willingness to host the meeting in Kinshasa.

A mandate was given to the Bureau, the secretariat and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make all the necessary arrangements for the organization of the Conference.

X. Consideration of the draft resolution on the activities of the Advisory Committee

The Committee considered and adopted a draft resolution on its activities, which will be submitted at the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

It recommended that all the member countries should contact their Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York to urge them to support actively the adoption of the draft resolution.

XI. Programme of work of the Committee for 2001-2002

- Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts (Kinshasa, November 2001, date to be determined)
- Meeting of chiefs of staff to review the Biyongho-98 exercise (Libreville, October 2001, date to be determined)
- High-level seminar on the organization and operation of the early warning mechanism (Yaoundé, date to be determined)
- Seventeenth ministerial meeting of the Committee (Kinshasa, March 2002, dates to be determined)
- Eighteenth ministerial meeting of the Committee (Bangui, dates to be determined)
- Meeting of experts on the establishment of a women's network on efforts towards peace and security in Central Africa (Malabo, date to be determined)

XII. Date of the next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its seventeenth ministerial meeting in Kinshasa in the second half of March 2002, on dates to be determined.

XIII. Other matters

In order to take a fresh approach to the conduct of its meetings, the Committee decided that the review of Central Africa's geopolitical situation and security should henceforth be prepared by the Committee's secretariat so that the members could react to and discuss it even more candidly.

The Committee urged member States to make regular contributions to the trust fund intended to finance its activities.

Lastly, the participants welcomed the favourable climate that had prevailed throughout their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, H.E. Major-General Joseph Kabila, and to the Congolese Government and people for the warm welcome and fraternal attentions paid to them during their stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Kinshasa, 17 August 2001

United Nations A/56/379

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 September 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 98 (a)
Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Progress in preparatory activities for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 55/199, entitled "Ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development", the General Assembly decided to organize the ten-year review at the summit level, calling it the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Summit will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002. By the same resolution, the Assembly emphasized the importance of early and effective preparations for the Summit and laid out guidelines for the preparatory process. Moreover, the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to submit for its consideration at its fifty-sixth session a progress report on the state of preparations. The present report, in response to that invitation, is based on information available as of 31 August 2001.

2. By resolution 55/199, the Assembly also decided that the meetings of the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development should be transformed into an open-ended Preparatory Committee to provide for broad participation. Subsequently, the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held its organizational session in New York from 30 April to 2 May 2001. The Preparatory Committee carried out an initial review of progress in the preparatory activities at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels, as well as by major groups, and adopted several decisions relating to future preparatory work. The present report should therefore be read in conjunction with the report of the Preparatory Committee (A/56/19).

3. Also of close relevance to the present report is the report of the Secretary-General on progress in preparatory activities submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its organizational session (E/CN.17/2001/PC/23). The report describes, among other matters, national, regional and international preparatory processes and provides information on documentation, public outreach and involvement of major groups. Read together, the three reports provide an overview of the preparatory activities undertaken so far at the national, regional and international levels.

* Submission of the present report was postponed to 31 August 2001 in order to provide up-to-date information on the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, including the outcomes of regional round table consultations and other national and regional input.

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II. Progress in preparatory activities

4. The decision taken by the General Assembly to convene the World Summit on Sustainable Development has met with strong support by stakeholders across the world. There has emerged a consensus that the Summit is taking place at a crucial juncture and will be a turning point in moving the global society to a sustainable future. The tempo of preparatory activities in recent months has accelerated, with many more events being planned or envisaged by stakeholders at various levels.

National preparations

5. Preparatory work at the national level has been progressing on several fronts, involving the establishment of national preparatory committees, national consultations with stakeholders and preparation of national assessments. The Secretariat has also invited countries to launch four initiatives to help raise awareness, mobilize support and enhance the sense of ownership of the preparatory process. These initiatives are: (a) 101 ways to promote sustainable development; (b) sustainable development visions for the twenty-first century; (c) children's Agenda 21 posters; and (d) national progression targets. The report of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 3 above provides a succinct account on possible ways to implement these initiatives expeditiously. Recent national reports indicate that, in an increasing number of countries, efforts are under way to promote their implementation.

6. By 31 August 2001, over 40 Member States had notified the Secretariat of the establishment of a National Preparatory Committee or similar mechanism to coordinate national preparations for the Summit. The national committees are expected to undertake national assessments, raise awareness, and mobilize support at the local and national levels. A list of these national committees with relevant information, including contact information, has been placed on the Secretariat web site dedicated to the Summit (http://www.johannesburgsummit.org) and is being updated as information becomes available.

7. National consultations with stakeholders and the preparation of national assessments are important avenues for carrying out a comprehensive and balanced appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and for identifying accomplishments and constraints and addressing future challenges. While most national assessments are still under way, the Secretariat has so far received assessment reports from 11 countries. A number of the reports prepared by national councils for sustainable development have been recognized by their Governments as the official national assessment reports and have been made available to the Secretariat. While the structure and length of these reports vary, they all contain information on policy measures that have been adopted since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and on the specific challenges and constraints countries face. The Secretariat has posted these and other relevant reports on its Summit web site and will continue doing so as new reports become available. The Secretariat has also been informed that some 90 more national assessments have been completed lately, many with the support of the Capacity 21 Unit of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

8. To facilitate the work of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretariat is in the process of preparing and updating country profiles based on national reports submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development since 1993. The profiles provide an overview of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the country level on an issue-by-issue basis. So far, over 120 drafts of national profiles have been completed and are being reviewed and updated by Governments. The completed country profiles will be made available on the Secretariat web site on national information (http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/), as well as to the Preparatory Committee at its meeting in January 2002.

9. Participation by local communities and representatives of civil society in national consultations and national assessments is essential to a bottom-up and effective participatory preparatory process. A number of Governments have actively encouraged such involvement and have organized meetings and public forum discussions to facilitate exchanges of views and stakeholder dialogues. The Government of Mongolia, for example, held a series of conferences for young people to discuss sustainable development issues. The National Commission on Sustainable Development of Thailand is organizing multi-stakeholder consultations to prepare the national sustainable development programme. Finland is promoting national discussion on sustainable development in different seminars as

well as through the media. It is also participating in the implementation of the initiatives of 101 ways to promote sustainable development and children's Agenda 21 posters. As part of the domestic consultation process, Australia has also scheduled a series of consultation forums for stakeholders in major cities from August to September 2001. These meetings are open to all interested stakeholders and members of the public.

10. Major groups have also taken an active role in national preparations. The Forum for Environment for Ethiopia has launched a series of activities designed to encourage participation by non-governmental organizations and civil society in the national preparatory process. The Armenian Association for Sustainable Human Development has initiated action to implement 101 ways to promote sustainable development and children's Agenda 21 posters initiatives. The United Nations Association-Canada has started a "Youth agenda 2002" project to support active and substantive youth participation in the national review by creating a national youth network around social, cultural, economic and environmental issues in Canada. In the United States, the Citizens Network for Sustainable Development has been actively involved in citizen initiatives and preparatory activities. The network is also moving forward by creating a U.S. Citizens Preparatory Committee to ensure active participation from United States citizens in the preparatory process.

11. Major groups involved in Local Agenda 21 activities have also undertaken their own assessments. For instance, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, in cooperation with the International Union of Local Authorities, the Secretariat and UNDP, has launched an international survey to assess the impact of Local Agenda 21 activities and identify tangible outcomes of such initiatives. A report based on the results of the survey will be available in January 2002.[1]

Regional and subregional preparations

12. Regional and subregional preparatory processes have been moving forward along three tracks — regional and subregional intergovernmental preparatory meetings, regional round tables and stakeholder consultations. As of 31 August 2001, all five eminent persons' regional round tables have taken place; all four subregional preparatory meetings for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as one for Asia and the Pacific have been organized, with more scheduled for September and October. Regional intergovernmental preparatory meetings will be held from September to November and will receive input from regional round tables, subregional meetings and stakeholder consultations. A complete list of subregional and regional intergovernmental preparatory meetings is annexed to the present report.

13. The stakeholder consultations are organized in a time-frame allowing them to feed into other national and regional preparatory events and activities, including intergovernmental meetings. For instance, the Jakarta Regional Forum, "Business Opportunities and Sustainable Development Partnership Strategies", was scheduled from 3 to 5 September 2001, back to back with the meeting of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee. The report of the Forum will be submitted to the regional intergovernmental meeting and will be available for consideration at global thematic round tables. A calendar of meetings and events involving stakeholder consultations can be accessed on the major groups' web page of the Secretariat web site devoted to the Summit.

14. While subregional preparatory meetings focused on problems specific to countries in the subregion, a number of common issues have emerged from the meetings. For example, at the Southern Cone Preparatory Meeting (Santiago, 14-15 June 2001) and the Caribbean Subregional Preparatory Meeting (Havana, 28-29 June 2001) strong concern was expressed over the challenges to sustainable development posed by globalization. At the Regional Assessment Conference for Central and Eastern European countries (Bucharest, 27-28 June 2001), as well as at the Southern Cone and Caribbean regional preparatory meetings, finance for sustainable development was identified as a key issue to the success of sustainable development policy.

15. Other relevant regional and subregional meetings have also yielded interesting information on regional trends as well as important policy findings. For instance, in a regional message for the Summit adopted at a ministerial conference in Kitakyushu City, Japan, last September, ministers from Asian and Pacific region countries pointed out that the Asia and the Pacific region could be characterized by degradation superlatives. These include: (i) the largest land area

affected by soil degradation and human-induced salinization; (ii) the largest contribution of total sediment transport into the oceans; (iii) the highest level of water withdrawals for agriculture; and (iv) the largest population of the world's poor (E/ESCAP/SO/MCED(00)/1, annex II). Ministers emphasized in the message that the problem of poverty and illiteracy has greatly hampered sustainable development in the region and poverty reduction is thus the key to achieving sustainable development.

16. The Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum composed of all Arctic countries, with Arctic indigenous people participating in its work on a permanent basis, met in Rovaniemi, Finland, on 11 June 2001 and adopted an initial Arctic Message for the Summit. The message highlighted, among other things, the challenge of securing sustainability in the use of natural resources in the Arctic region. It emphasized that all Arctic States should assess the environmental, social and economic impacts of any undertaking to exploit resources in the Arctic portion of their territory, taking into account the latest research on the specific circumstances of the Arctic.

17. The five eminent persons' regional round tables, organized by the Secretariat in collaboration with host Governments, also reached important conclusions. In the round table for Europe and North America (Vail, United States, 6-8 June 2001), organized in collaboration with the Denver-based Center for Resource Management, participants recognized that this region uses an unfair amount of the world's resources and has a special responsibility for eradicating global poverty. They expressed a profound sense of urgency in regard to global trends and agreed that the present generation may be among the last that can correct the current course of unsustainable development before it reaches a point of no return. They proposed, among other actions, that a public awareness campaign be launched to change unsustainable consumption patterns.

18. At the round table for Latin America and the Caribbean (Barbados, 18-20 June 2001), participants identified as overriding issues the region's high levels of poverty and income inequality and recognized the serious pressures facing the region's biodiversity. They also highlighted the need for robust and sustained economic growth; political and institutional reforms to strengthen democracy and freedom; greater political commitment by Governments and stronger administrative infrastructure to implement public policies for sustainable development; and technical and financial assistance to support national strategies for sustainable development. Among the concrete proposals from this round table was the establishment of a "Village of Hope" in Johannesburg, similar to the one set up at the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in Barbados, where best practices could be displayed and disseminated.

19. At the African round table (Cairo, 25-27 June 2001), participants underscored the serious challenges facing Africa and devoted considerable attention to the challenge of globalization. It was recognized that, overall, Africa has not benefited from globalization and that Africa must take steps through increasing scientific capacity, better education and better governance to become part of the globalization trend. The round table also considered the following priority areas: food and agriculture; energy; technology; regional integration; transport and infrastructure; peace and stability; finance; and institutions. Participants recommend that the regional preparatory meeting select from the report of the round table a set of priority issues and develop them for endorsement at the Summit in Johannesburg.

20. At the round table for Asia and the Pacific (Kuala Lumpur, 9-11 July 2001), participants noted that the huge diversity of the region poses particular challenges for achieving sustainable development and that the 1997 financial crisis has diminished the capacity of many countries in the region to address these challenges. While the Rio Earth Summit created a greater awareness in the region of the need for sustainable development, progress is not readily discernible and natural resource depletion and environmental degradation have generally worsened. Among the priority areas identified for the region are the impacts of globalization; capacity-building and the need for a dialogue on science for sustainable development; poverty reduction; finance for sustainable development; technology transfer; public participation and governance; food security; population and migration; and the proliferation of small arms. Various proposals for regional cooperation were presented, including proposals for the establishment of a regional council for sustainable development and the organization of a regional symposium on science for sustainable development.

21. At the round table for Central Asia (Bishkek, 30 July-2 August 2001), participants noted that the region encompasses the two most populous countries in the world. They also highlighted the considerable political changes in the Central Asian countries, the sometimes harsh physical conditions and certain intraregional conflicts, all of which pose the overriding challenge of how to move towards sustainable development in practice. The problems of the land-locked countries of the region and of drug trafficking in and through the region were stressed. Participants agreed that a key issue is to find a development path that is consistent with the cultural values of the region. Among the priority areas identified for consideration were new approaches to development; better governance; stronger institutions; participation and information for sustainable development; and sustainable development and use of natural resources. Participants proposed that the Summit agree on a process that would lead to a global scheme for restructuring foreign debt.

22. The reports of the round table consultations will be submitted to the respective regional and subregional preparatory committee meetings. To this end, the five regional economic commissions have been asked to translate the round table reports into the relevant languages and to submit the reports to the regional preparatory committee meetings as official United Nations documents. The regional economic commissions have also been asked to provide time for the round table chairpersons to present the results of the round tables to the preparatory committee meetings.

International preparations

23. Preparations at the international level are progressing mainly within the United Nations framework, through intergovernmental preparatory meetings and events and activities coordinated by the Secretariat. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Commission have also organized meetings addressing the preparations for the Summit.

24. At its organizational session, the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Summit reviewed progress in preparatory activities at various levels and adopted decisions on specific modalities of its future sessions and arrangements for accreditation and participation of relevant non-governmental organizations and other major groups. The Preparatory Committee also recommended a draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly on the provisional rules of procedure of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

25. Recognizing the importance of fully considering the reports of all relevant intergovernmental processes, the Preparatory Committee invited the United Nations Resident Coordinators to facilitate support from the United Nations system to country-level preparations. It urged bilateral and multilateral donors to support preparatory activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition as a matter of priority.

26. Organizations of the United Nations system have actively engaged in preparatory activities at all levels. The United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP, the regional commissions and other international and regional organizations have been active partners in preparing for the regional and subregional meetings. They have also provided support to stakeholder consultations and contributed to other meetings or events relevant to the Summit.

27. In addition, the Secretariat is exploring possibilities for holding global thematic round tables that will focus on issues of a global nature. Currently, efforts are under way to finalize the themes, dates and venues of the global round tables. Information updates will be uploaded onto the Secretariat web site on the Summit when available. The recommendations from the global round tables will be transmitted to the meetings of the Preparatory Committee.

III. Participation by major groups

28. Effective contributions from and active participation by major groups and civil society are essential to a transparent, dynamic and interactive preparatory process. In its resolution on progress in the preparatory activities at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels, as well as by major groups (resolution 2001/PC/1), the Preparatory Committee encouraged further preparatory initiatives by major groups, in particular those that result in new partnerships and commitments to sustainable development. The Preparatory Committee also adopted a decision on the arrangements for the

accreditation and participation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups in the preparatory process and in the World Summit (decision 2001/PC/3). Efforts are already under way to prepare for the multi-stakeholder dialogue segments at the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee.

29. In the report of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 3 above, an account of the major groups' international initiatives is given in section IX, showing the broad range of their activities and their deep commitment. Most of these initiatives are either ongoing or will take place in the coming months. Recently, the Secretariat has started to list on its Summit web site the major groups' initiatives, providing links to them and forming an easily navigable network of major groups' web sites, showing them in action in preparation for the Summit. The list will be updated regularly so as to keep all interested stakeholders informed.

Notes

[1] See E/CN.17/2001/PC/23 for a more detailed account of the survey.

Annex

List of regional and subregional intergovernmental preparatory meetings (as of 31 August 2001)

Regional and subregional preparatory committee meetings	*Venue*	*Dates (2001)*
Africa		
Regional preparatory committee	Nairobi	6-9 November
Southern Africa	Port Louis	17-19 September
Northern Africa	Tunis	5-7 September
Eastern Africa	Nairobi	10-12 September
Central Africa	Libreville	17-19 September
Western Africa	Abuja	1-3 October
Asia and the Pacific		
Regional preparatory committee	Phnom Penh	27-29 November
North-East Asia	Beijing	26-28 July
South-East Asia	Manila	17-19 October
Central Asia*	Almaty	19-21 September
Southern Asia	Colombo	27-29 September
Pacific region	Apia	5-7 September
West Asia		
Regional preparatory committee	Cairo	24-25 October
Latin America and the Caribbean		
Regional preparatory committee	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	23-24 October
Southern Cone	Santiago, Chile	14-15 June
Caribbean region	Havana	28-29 June
Andean region	Quito	2-3 July
Meso-America	San Salvador	17-18 July
Europe		
Regional preparatory committee	Geneva, Switzerland	24-25 September
Central-Eastern Europe	Bucharest	27-28 June

* This subregional preparatory committee includes representatives from countries in both the Asian and European regions.

United Nations A/56/380

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 September 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 122 of the provisional agenda*
Crime prevention and criminal justice

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Note by the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the High-level Political Signing Conference for the United Nations Conference against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, which was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, for information and follow-up, particularly with the objective of supporting the early entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto. The document was originally distributed on 22 May 2001 under the symbol A/CONF.195/2 and Corr.1.

* A/56/150.

01-54989 (E) 250901

Report of the High-level Political Signing Conference for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, held in Palermo, Italy, from 12 to 15 December 2000

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Chapter I
Background of and preparations for the Conference

1. On the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Economic and Social Council (Council resolution 1998/14 of 28 July 1998), the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/111 of 9 December 1998, in which it decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee for the purpose of elaborating a comprehensive international convention against transnational organized crime and of discussing the elaboration, as appropriate, of international instruments addressing trafficking in women and children, combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and illegal trafficking in and transporting of migrants, including by sea.

2. In its resolution 54/126 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to intensify its work in order to complete it in 2000 and decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should submit the final text of the draft United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the draft protocols thereto to the Assembly for early adoption, prior to a high-level political signing conference. In its resolution 54/129 of 17 December 1999, the Assembly accepted with appreciation the offer of the Government of Italy to host a high-level political signing conference in Palermo for the purpose of signing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention) and the protocols thereto.

3. The Ad Hoc Committee held 11 sessions from January 1999 to October 2000 and finalized the texts of the draft Convention, the draft Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the draft Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In complying with General Assembly resolution 54/126, the Ad Hoc Committee submitted its report and the texts of the draft instruments, as well as the text of a draft resolution, to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session for consideration and action.

4. In its resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

5. In resolution 55/25, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report on the high-level political signing conference to be held in Palermo in accordance with resolution 54/129. The present report is submitted to the Assembly pursuant to that request.

Chapter II
Attendance and organization of work

A. Date and venue of the Conference

6. The High-level Political Signing Conference for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto was held in Palermo, Italy, from 12 to 15 December 2000 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/129.

7. The signatories to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols are listed in annex I to the present report.

B. Attendance

8. The following States were represented at the Conference: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador,

Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

9. The following United Nations offices and organs were represented by observers: International Narcotics Control Board, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

10. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was represented by an observer.

11. The following affiliated regional institutes and associated institutes were also represented by observers: European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime and International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council.

12. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Council of Europe, Council of the European Union, Customs Cooperation Council (also called the World Customs Organization), European Commission, European Police Office (Europol), International Centre for Migration Policy Development, International Criminal Police Organization, International Organization for Migration, Latin American Parliament, League of Arab States, Offshore Group of Banking Supervisors, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

13. The following non-governmental organizations were represented by observers:

General consultative status:

Soroptimist International, Women's Federation for World Peace International, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Organization of the Scout Movement.

Special consultative status:

Centro Nazionale di Prevenzione e Difesa Sociale, Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Fondazione Giovanni e Francesca Falcone, International Association against Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking, International Association of Judges, International Association of Penal Law, Italian Centre of Solidarity, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and International Movement of Catholic Students).

Other:

International Association of Prosecutors, La Strada, Libera—Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie, Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation.

14. Over 170 individual experts participated in the Conference as observers.

C. Opening of the Conference

15. The High-level Political Signing Conference for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was opened on 12 December 2000 by the President of Italy and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Conference observed a minute of silence for those who had sacrificed their lives in the fight against organized crime and for the victims of such crime.

16. The Secretary-General stated that the Conference was evidence of the will of the international community to answer a global challenge with a global response. Arrayed against the constructive forces of civil society—the citizens' groups, businesses,

professors, journalists, unions, political parties and others having an essential role to play in running any society—were the forces of "uncivil society"—terrorists, criminals, drug dealers, those engaged in trafficking in persons and others undermining the good works of civil society. The forces of "uncivil society" were powerful, representing the entrenched interests of a global enterprise worth billions of dollars, but they were not invincible, as shown by the success of the people of Palermo against organized crime, which had been achieved at great cost. The Palermo Convention gave the world a new tool with which to address the scourge of crime as a global problem. The Secretary-General urged all States to ratify the Convention and its protocols at the earliest possible date.

17. The President of Italy, in his address to the Conference, emphasized that the Convention and its protocols provided an international framework for combating the most heinous crimes. Organized crime was the gravest problem of modern times. Policies for prevention and law enforcement would be more effective if they were backed by values shared by all. Advancements in information technology had opened new paths for the spread of organized crime. It was up to the international community to close off those paths with the appropriate measures. The President paid tribute to all those in Sicily who had had the courage to stand up to organized crime. He stated that the world should continue with confidence along the path that they had opened. He added that he hoped that the Convention and its protocols would enter into force as soon as possible.

18. The Minister of Justice of Italy paid tribute to judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, who, like many others, had paid the highest price in their efforts to fight organized crime. He stated that there was a need to strengthen international law and cooperation in law enforcement, as people were no longer citizens of individual countries but were citizens of the world, which was becoming increasingly mobile. The Convention and its protocols offered possibilities for legislative measures that would become the core of the efforts to fight organized crime. Those instruments would also become the fundamental mechanisms for fighting a criminal market that was both expanding and becoming stronger. He stated that the Government of Italy hoped that all States would sign the instruments. He announced that, on 11 December, his Government had enacted legislation according to which it would contribute annually 25 per cent of the confiscated proceeds of organized crime to the United Nations to help it fight transnational crime.

19. The President of the Region of Sicily stated that the Conference was a historic event in the fight against organized crime and the struggle for democracy. In an age of globalization, a strong, determined and incisive policy was needed at the international level. The Convention offered the framework for such a policy.

20. The President of the Province of Palermo emphasized that the programme for countering organized crime in Sicily was based on three pillars: development, employment and security. The aim was to make the province suitable for entrepreneurial activities and totally unsuitable for organized crime.

21. The Mayor of Palermo recalled that, in the past, Palermo had been a symbol of fear, pain and the violent supremacy of the mafia. Since then, it had been culturally reborn, through the commitment of civil society, in particular its citizens. The city that had once exported the disease of evil was currently offering the cure for that disease. Law enforcement and cultural and socio-economic progress were the two wheels of a cart that needed to move forward at the same speed in order for the fight against organized crime to be successful. That was the model that Palermo offered the rest of the world.

22. The President of Poland addressed the Conference as a special guest, in recognition of the leading role that his country had played in the development of the Convention. He stated that the Convention opened a new chapter in international cooperation, sending a signal to the world that the United Nations was determined to wage a war against crime. Globalization provided great opportunities but was also fraught with risks. Organized crime crossed state and continental borders and was a threat to society. Only by taking immediate and radical joint action would the world have a chance to fight organized crime effectively. He recalled that Poland had presented to the General Assembly in 1996 the first draft of a framework convention against organized crime. That initiative had led to the commencement of negotiations on the new instruments. The fact that those negotiations had been completed in less than two years was a testimony to the commitment and mobilization of the international community. The greatest strength of the new instruments was their

universality. The instruments ensured that the international community was entering the new millennium with effective measures against transnational organized crime.

23. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat stated that the Convention and its protocols, which were the first legally binding international instruments for fighting organized crime, would help eliminate the inconsistencies among States that criminal networks had been exploiting. The new instruments brought together from several parts of the globe the best practices in combating organized criminal groups. The Convention offered the most advanced set of tools ever to be made available to policy makers, investigators and civil society to help them prevent large-scale crime. The protocols would bring about a change so that child labourers or prostitutes would no longer be viewed as accomplices, but as victims of a new form of slavery. The presence of the international community in Palermo and the adoption of the Convention were potent symbols of hope and a lesson for those who believed that cross-border crime was invincible. However, no person should believe that facing organized crime was easy or that the fight against it had been won. The deaths of judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino were a stark reminder of the high price that many had paid in the struggle against organized crime. The Convention was a milestone and a tribute to the thousands of men and women who had lost their lives in pursuit of a world free of mafia and criminal violence. The Executive Director expressed the hope that the Conference and the new Convention would be the beginning of a process that would result in a world of peace, justice and respect for the rule of law.

D. Election of the President of the Conference and other officers

24. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 12 December, the Conference elected, by acclamation, Piero Fassino, Minister of Justice of Italy, President of the Conference.

25. At the same meeting, the Conference also elected by acclamation the following Vice-Presidents: Gonzalo Salvador (Ecuador), Marylise Lebranchu (France), Nobuyasu Abe (Japan), Eduardo Ibarrola Nicolín (Mexico), Shaukat Umer (Pakistan), Janusz Rydzkowski (Poland), Alojz Némethy (Slovakia), Béchir Tekari (Tunisia) and Penuell Mpapa Maduna (South Africa), who also served as Rapporteur.

E. Adoption of the rules of procedure

26. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 12 December 2000, the Conference decided that, in the absence of special rules of procedure for the Conference, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly would apply, mutatis mutandis, with the necessary adjustments, including:

(a) The Vice-Presidents of the Conference would be elected from the States constituting the bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime established by the General Assembly;

(b) The preparation of the provisional agenda would be in line with General Assembly resolution 54/129;

(c) No General Committee would be established;

(d) Instead of verbatim and summary records, the Rapporteur would prepare a comprehensive report of the Conference.

F. Adoption of the agenda

27. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 12 December 2000, the Conference adopted its provisional agenda (A/CONF.195/1), which had been finalized following an open-ended consultation on the Conference with representatives of Member States, held in Vienna on 27 September 2000. The agenda was as follows:

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Organizational matters:
   (a) Election of the President of the Conference;
   (b) Adoption of rules of procedure;
   (c) Election of other officers;

(d) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work;

(e) Credentials of representatives to the Conference:

(i) Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee;

(ii) Report of the Credentials Committee.

3. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto: follow-up activities and future work for their effective implementation.

4. Signature of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto.

5. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

G. Organization of work

28. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 12 December, the Conference approved its organization of work (A/CONF.195/1, annex), which had been finalized following the open-ended consultation on the Conference with representatives of Member States, held in Vienna on 27 September 2000.

H. Credentials of representatives to the Conference: appointment of members of the Credentials Committee and report of the Committee

29. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 12 December, the Conference decided to establish a Credentials Committee of nine members based upon the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session; thus, the membership of the Credentials Committee would be composed of the Bahamas, China, Ecuador, Gabon, Ireland, Mauritius, the Russian Federation, Thailand and the United States. That decision was taken on the understanding that the Conference would replace any State not present by another State from the same regional group.

30. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 14 December, the Conference approved the report of the Credentials Committee.

Chapter III
Proceedings of the Conference

31. At the 2nd to 7th plenary meetings, from 12 to 15 December 2000, statements were made by 105 high-level officials. Those statements are summarized in annex II to the present report.

32. At the 2nd meeting, on 12 December, the following persons made statements:

Thomas Klestil
Federal President of the Republic of Austria

Mario Frick
Head of the Government of Liechtenstein

Apollo Robin Nsibambi
Prime Minister of Uganda

Hugo Banzer Suárez
Constitutional President of the Republic of Bolivia

Boris Trajkovski
President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Rexhep Meidani
President of the Republic of Albania

Agbeyome Kodjo
Prime Minister, Head of the Government of Togo

Emomali Rakhmonov
President of the Republic of Tajikistan

Martin Raguz
Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Cassam Uteem
President of the Republic of Mauritius

James A. Michel
Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles

Juan Francisco Reyes López
Vice-President of the Republic of Guatemala

Gustavo Bell Lemus
Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia

Stjepan Mesic
President of the Republic of Croatia

Marylise Lebranchu
Minister of Justice of France

Herta Däubler-Gmelin
Federal Minister of Justice of Germany

Seyed Kamal Kharrazi
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Sergei B. Ivanov
Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation

Jaroslaw Kaczynski
Minister of Justice of Poland

33. At the 3rd meeting, on 13 December, the following persons made statements:

Mamadou Lamine Ba
Minister of the Environment of Senegal

António Luis Santos da Costa
Minister of Justice of Portugal

Aydin Sahir Ipas
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations (Vienna)

Guangya Wang
Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of China

Benachenhou Abdellatif
Minister of Finance of Algeria

Mikhail Korniyenko
First Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs of Ukraine

Frank E. Loy
Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Department of State of the United States of America

Jaime Mayor Oreja
Minister of the Interior of Spain

Elsa Kelly
Ambassador of Argentina to Italy

Thomas Bodström
Minister of Justice of Sweden

Kiyohiro Araki
Senior State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Isamu Ueda
Member of the House of Representatives, Japan

Jung-kil Kim
Minister of Justice of the Republic of Korea

Frank Jensen
Minister of Justice of Denmark

Suchart Traiprasit
Attorney-General, Thailand

Mikhail Saakashvili
Minister of Justice of Georgia

José Gregori
Minister of Justice of Brazil

34. At the 4th meeting, on 13 December, the following persons made statements:

Gonzalo Salvador
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador

Joseph H. Gnonlonfoun
Minister of Justice of Benin

Sule Lamido
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria

Yusril Ihza Mahendra
Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Indonesia

Michail Stathopoulos
Minister of Justice of Greece

Abdelrahman Al-Abbar
Minister of Justice of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Winston Spadafora F.
Minister of the Interior and Justice of Panama

Stephen Vukile Ishwete
Minister for Safety and Security of South Africa

Nguyen Dinh Loc
Minister of Justice of Viet Nam

Jorge Burgos Varela
Deputy Minister of the Interior of Chile

Eduardo Ibarroia Nicolín
Deputy Attorney-General for Legal and International Affairs, Mexico

John O'Donoghue
Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform of Ireland

Roberto Díaz Sotolongo
Minister of Justice of Cuba

Gheorghe Mocuta
Secretary of State of Romania

Marc Verwilghen
Minister of Justice of Belgium

Philippe Deslandes
Ministry of the Interior of Monaco

Victor G. Garcia III
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations (Vienna)

35. At the 5th meeting, on 14 December, the following persons made statements:

Sándor Pintér
Minister of the Interior of Hungary

Hamed Al-Othman
Attorney-General, Kuwait

William Rory Steele
Ambassador of Australia to Italy

Diego García-Sayán
Minister of Justice of Peru

Ruth Metzler-Arnold
Federal Councillor of Switzerland

Béchir Tekari
Minister of Justice of Tunisia

Yehuda Millo
Ambassador of Israel to Italy

Oystein Maeland
State Secretary of Norway

Anaclet Imbiki
Minister of Justice of Madagascar

Fikrat Mammadov
Minister of Justice of Azerbaijan

Shaukat Umer
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations (Vienna)

Barbara Roche, MP
Minister of State of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Lilian E. Patel
Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Malawi

Maher Abdel Wahed
Prosecutor-General, Egypt

Alojz Némethy
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations (Vienna)

Omurbek Kutuev
Minister of the Interior of Kyrgyzstan

Aboud Al-Sarraj
Dean of the Faculty of Law, Damascus University, Syrian Arab Republic

Mohamed Amin Hawamdeh
Attorney-General, Jordan

Igor Rogov
Minister of Justice of Kazakhstan

Tigran Mukuchyan
Deputy Minister of Justice of Armenia

36. At the 6th meeting, on 14 December, the following persons made statements:

Natalya Drozd
Ambassador of Belarus to Italy

Sévérin Ntahomvukiye
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burundi

Ernest Ngarikutuke Tjiriange
Minister of Justice of Namibia

Weredewold Woldie
Minister of Justice of Ethiopia

Simon Joseph Draper
Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of New Zealand (Italy)

Clifford S. Mamba
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Swaziland to the United Nations

Wildo Rienzi Galeano
Minister of the Supreme Court of Justice of Paraguay

Tajeddine Baddou
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations (Vienna)

Petros Clerides
Deputy Attorney-General, Cyprus

Robert Mbella Mbappe
Minister of Justice of Cameroon

Thomas Motsoahae Thabane
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lesotho

Thomas Sanon
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations (Vienna)

Jean de Dieu Mucyo
Minister of Justice and Institutional Relations of Rwanda

Paul Dubois
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations (Vienna)

Francesca Michelotti
Minister for Internal Affairs and Justice of San Marino

Antonieta Rosa Gomes
Minister of Justice of Guinea-Bissau

Costa Ricky Mahalu
Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to Italy

Hemayet Uddin
Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

Ibrahim Bocar Daga
Ambassador of Mali to Italy

Abdullah Abdullah
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan

Tonio Borg
Minister of the Interior of Malta

Medina Roy Edmundo
Attorney-General of Honduras

Vladimir Tsurcan
Minister for Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova

Tigran Mukuchyan
Deputy Minister of Justice of Armenia

37. At the 7th meeting, on 15 December, the following persons made statements:

Batty Weerakoon
Minister of Justice of Sri Lanka

Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice of the Sudan

Joaquim Alberto Chissano
Head of State of the Republic of Mozambique

Fernando Gerbasi
Ambassador of Venezuela to Italy

Jean-Martin Mbemba
Minister of Justice of the Congo

Ousman Badjie
Secretary of State for the Interior of the Gambia

Raj Kumar Singh
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, India

Edwin M. Hatembo
Deputy Minister for Home Affairs of Zambia

Christiaan Kröner
Ambassador of the Netherlands to Italy

38. The representative of the European Commission also made a statement.

39. In its resolution 54/129, the General Assembly requested that the Conference include opportunities for high-level delegates to discuss matters related to the Convention and the protocols thereto, in particular the follow-up activities, for their effective implementation and future work. Accordingly, the organization of work included the following events:

(a) Symposium on the Rule of Law in the Global Village—issues of Sovereignty and Universality, held in the Palazzo dei Normanni, Palermo, from 12 to 14 December 2000;

(b) Seminar on Transnational Organized Crime and the Media, held in the Palazzo dei Normanni, on 13 December 2000;

(c) Forum for Global Action against Trafficking in Persons, held in the Palazzo Biscari, Catania, on 14 December 2000;

(d) Symposium on the Role of Civil Society in Countering Organized Crime, held in the Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, Palermo, on 14 December 2000;

(e) Ancillary meeting: Prevention Strategies against Organized Crime: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations, held in the Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, Palermo, on 13 December 2000.

Chapter IV
Adoption of the report and closure of the Conference

40. At its 7th meeting, on 15 December, the Conference considered and adopted its report (A/CONF.195/L.1). Closing statements were made by the President of the Conference and the Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

Annex I

Signatories to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto, 12-15 December 2000

Signatory	*Convention*[a]	*Trafficking in Persons Protocol*[b]	*Migrants Protocol*[c]
1. States			
Afghanistan	x		
Albania	x	x	x
Algeria	x		
Angola	x		
Argentina	x	x	x
Australia	x		
Austria	x	x	x
Azerbaijan	x	x	x
Belarus	x	x	x
Belgium	x	x	x
Benin	x	x	
Bolivia	x	x	x
Bosnia and Herzegovina	x	x	x
Brazil	x	x	x
Bulgaria	x	x	x
Burkina Faso	x	x	x
Burundi	x	x	x
Cameroon	x	x	x
Canada	x	x	x
Cape Verde	x	x	x
Chile	x		
China	x		
Colombia	x	x	
Congo	x	x	x
Côte d'Ivoire	x		
Croatia	x	x	x
Cuba	x		
Cyprus	x	x	x
Czech Republic	x		
Denmark	x	x	x
Dominican Republic	x	x	x
Ecuador	x	x	x
Egypt	x		
El Salvador	x		
Equatorial Guinea	x	x	x
Estonia	x		
Ethiopia	x		

Signatory	*Convention*[a]	*Trafficking in Persons Protocol*[b]	*Migrants Protocol*[c]
Finland	x	x	x
France	x	x	x
Gambia	x	x	x
Georgia	x	x	x
Germany	x	x	x
Greece	x	x	x
Guatemala	x		
Guinea-Bissau	x	x	x
Haiti	x	x	x
Honduras	x		
Hungary	x	x	x
Iceland	x	x	x
Indonesia	x	x	x
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	x		
Ireland	x	x	x
Israel	x		
Italy	x	x	x
Japan	x		
Kazakhstan	x		
Kuwait	x		
Kyrgyzstan	x	x	x
Latvia	x		
Lesotho	x	x	x
Liechtenstein	x		
Lithuania	x		
Luxembourg	x	x	x
Madagascar	x	x	x
Malawi	x		
Mali	x	x	x
Malta	x	x	x
Mauritius	x		
Mexico	x	x	x
Monaco	x	x	x
Morocco	x		
Mozambique	x	x	x
Namibia	x	x	x
Netherlands	x	x	x
New Zealand	x	x	x
Nicaragua	x		
Nigeria	x	x	x
Norway	x	x	x
Pakistan	x		
Panama	x	x	x
Paraguay	x	x	
Peru	x	x	x

Signatory	*Convention*[a]	*Trafficking in Persons Protocol*[b]	*Migrants Protocol*[c]
Philippines	x	x	x
Poland	x		
Portugal	x	x	x
Republic of Korea	x	x	x
Republic of Moldova	x	x	x
Romania	x	x	x
Russian Federation	x	x	x
Rwanda	x	x	x
San Marino	x	x	x
Saudi Arabia	x		
Senegal	x	x	x
Seychelles	x	x	x
Singapore	x		
Slovakia	x		
Slovenia	x		
South Africa	x	x	x
Spain	x	x	x
Sri Lanka	x	x	x
Sudan	x		
Swaziland	x		
Sweden	x	x	x
Switzerland	x		
Syrian Arab Republic	x	x	x
Tajikistan	x		
Thailand	x		
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	x	x	x
Togo	x	x	x
Tunisia	x	x	x
Turkey	x	x	x
Uganda	x	x	x
Ukraine	x		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	x	x	x
United Republic of Tanzania	x	x	x
United States of America	x	x	x
Uruguay	x	x	x
Uzbekistan	x		
Venezuela	x	x	x
Viet Nam	x		
Yemen	x		
Yugoslavia	x	x	x
Zimbabwe	x		

Signatory	*Convention*[a]	*Trafficking in Persons Protocol*[b]	*Migrants Protocol*[c]
2. Regional economic integration organization			
European Community	x	x	x

[a] United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

[b] Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

[c] Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Annex II

Summary of statements

1. All speakers highlighted the changing nature of organized crime and the new realities facing individual countries and the international community as they entered the twenty-first century. It was stated that the new global society had created previously unknown possibilities for transnational organized crime to develop. Borders were the primary allies of organized crime. That form of crime thrived on the permeability of frontiers and technological changes and paid no attention to legal norms or the fundamental human rights of its victims. New forms of organized crime were in step with the latest technology. They constituted the greatest threats to modern democracy and peace. Transnational organized crime was one of the major obstacles to the current drive of many countries to establish democracy. A growing number of countries were facing the same threats and experiencing the same effects. Organized criminal groups were currently far better financed and more disciplined than previously suspected. They were no longer limited to clandestine loyalties, nor did they adhere to conventional forms. They were established more and more like companies, where each member of the group had a part in committing a particular offence, coordinating or operating a network. In addition, organized criminals displayed a significant level of flexibility. As one avenue was closed, they looked for new ones to explore. Transnational organized crime, with its potential to undermine not only legitimate sectors of society but entire social, economic and political systems, demanded a strong unequivocal response. There was no room for complacency; the world must remain on guard against this particularly dangerous form of criminal activity. When, in the pursuit of profit, it trampled on the humanity of citizens, the world must respond to it with a swift and fatal blow.

2. It was stated that the new realities should lead to the development of a new culture of safety based on shared values and similar perceptions of common enemies. To be successful in meeting the challenges of organized crime, the international community must be prepared to cooperate fully on all fronts and at all levels. The nature of transnational organized crime dictated that cooperation be strengthened and expanded. That was a shared responsibility and all must contribute. Along with Governments and international organizations, the public at large must be involved and kept informed of the fight against transnational crime. Holding in Palermo the High-level Political Signing Conference for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was a tribute to a community that had not given up the fight against organized crime and had often paid for it with tragic loss of life.

3. Admitting the direct relevance of crime prevention and criminal justice to sustainable development, stability, improved quality of life, democracy and human rights was regarded as a key factor of success. Success in the joint effort against transnational organized crime depended on the ability of all States to promote further the solidarity and cooperation they had shown during the negotiation of the Convention and its protocols.

4. It was noted that the Convention was the first international legal instrument to fight and prevent organized crime that provided for common legal standards. It was also a step towards advancing various concepts in current penal science and legal process. The Convention represented a new milestone in international cooperation against transnational organized crime and carried a powerful political message: it signalled the resolve of the international community to take battle to the innermost sanctums of transnational criminality. It was unprecedented to achieve with consensus, in such a short time, agreement on three international texts on three issues of critical importance to the international community. Those instruments had eliminated the difference in cultural viewpoints and established a structure for cooperative action. They included three common themes, which characterized successful multilateral agreements. Most importantly, the instruments established common standards that all States must meet while allowing for flexibility in how States met those standards. They allowed individual countries to tailor implementation to their own specific needs. Secondly, the international norms established by the Convention and its protocols facilitated increased cooperation among Governments and in particular

among law enforcement agencies. The wide range of measures on cooperation contained in the three instruments would provide national authorities with a more effective framework and a variety of tools. Extradition, mutual legal assistance, police cooperation and technical assistance were among the well-known tools of international cooperation in the struggle against crime. Thirdly, the Convention recognized the humanitarian aspects in fighting organized crime, in particular in dealing with trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. Punishing the criminal was only the beginning. The cornerstone of collective international work must be the protection of victims and the prevention of those crimes to begin with. Of the three instruments, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, contained the most far-reaching services for the protection of victims. That Protocol and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air filled a significant gap and promoted concerted action by governments against those who benefited by committing illicit acts against certain vulnerable groups. The Convention was conceived in such a way that, when the time came, its strength and usefulness could be enhanced by the addition of other legal instruments addressing emerging and pressing priorities of States.

5. Some speakers were of the view that the Convention did not address all aspects of combating organized crime, as it did not explicitly refer to the evident link between terrorist groups and other organized criminal groups. Despite that fact, those speakers still believed that the Convention and its protocols would improve the fight against transnational crime, should all the provisions be applied with determination.

6. Many speakers emphasized that, while the completion of the negotiations for the Convention and its protocols was certainly a cause for celebration, everyone must recognize that the fight against organized crime was far from over. The finalization of the Convention and its protocols was only the first step. As a next step, all countries should exert every effort to bring those legal instruments into force as soon as possible. The last phase would be implementation, which was crucial. The international community must not fail to see that the key to the expected effective role of the Convention in fighting organized crime lay in the faithful implementation of all its provisions.

7. All speakers expressed the hope that the Conference would serve as a catalyst for an early entry into force of the Convention and thus its effective implementation. The fact that representatives from so many countries had gathered in Palermo for the Conference was testimony to the determination of all the participants and the countries and organizations they represented. Speakers expressed their confidence in the willingness of the international community to join together to meet the challenge of transnational organized crime. It was noted that the battle against transnational organized crime would not culminate in the signing ceremony.

8. It was stated that there was a need to achieve results, but also to analyse and assess. Achieving results involved ensuring that the international legal obligations undertaken through the Convention and its protocols were translated into the domestic legislation of countries. Signing the Convention did not create the necessary domestic expertise in the different countries. It was necessary to train more legal personnel, in particular judges, and to build greater competence regarding the implementation of the Convention. Achieving results also related to transmitting more information to civil society, especially the media.

9. Many speakers highlighted the need to develop a better understanding of the relationship between crime and the pace of economic liberalization. Many countries were moving rapidly in the area of economic liberalization, in particular regarding trade, but were facing difficulty in developing the necessary mechanisms and institutions to ensure that the potentially adverse effects of that process were minimized. Another area where further study and analysis were essential was the effects of the activities of organized crime on the transition towards greater democracy. A third area was the link between organized crime and the security of States, in particular small, financially unstable States. The United Nations had a significant role to play in assisting States in carrying out that analysis and translating its results into appropriate policies and strategies.

10. Establishing penal and law enforcement regimes was not considered the complete answer to the need to prevent and control organized criminal activities effectively. For final success, appropriate socio-economic measures that would eliminate the root causes of the problem were necessary. Many speakers were aware of

the gap between developed and developing countries as far as the capacity to prevent and combat transnational organized crime was concerned. The lack of resources clearly affected the ability of developing countries to fight organized crime. It was recognized that many developing countries might not have the capacity to implement fully the provisions of the Convention and its protocols, despite the best of intentions and notwithstanding their unwavering commitment to bring their limited resources to bear in the achievement of the goals of the new instruments. That was in part because organized criminal groups were becoming increasingly sophisticated, having ready access to the latest technologies and to specialized services. Such groups remained beyond the reach of official crime prevention and control agencies in developing countries. It was in the mutual interest of all States to increase the ability of developing countries to protect themselves, their citizens and the international community from the scourge of transnational organized crime. Many speakers were pleased to note that the Convention and its protocols contained provisions that would enhance capacity-building, technical assistance and the sharing of information among States parties. They looked forward to increased technical assistance activities by the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Secretariat in support of developing countries in putting in place the required legislative and other regulatory measures for the implementation of the Convention and its protocols, as well as in training law enforcement officials and conducting legal system studies. They urged donor countries to contribute a substantial amount of expertise and funds to those operations so that the Centre could strengthen its activities as stipulated in the Convention.

11. It was stated that the Palermo Convention and its protocols must not remain a dead letter. Many speakers expressed their intention to give strength to the objectives and goals enshrined in the texts. The Centre for International Crime Prevention must not be simply a moral authority but should also become a strong institution and be given the tools to ensure the effectiveness of the Convention and its protocols. In that vein, many representatives indicated their intention to heed the call of the General Assembly and the Convention and to contribute in a concrete fashion to enabling the Centre to respond to the requests of developing countries and countries with economies in transition for support of their efforts to ratify and implement the Convention and its protocols. Such contributions were not a cost but an investment in the attainment of the common goals enunciated in the new instruments.

12. To implement fully the measures set forth in the Palermo Convention against transnational organized crime, it was necessary to take decisive action against corruption, especially among public officials. To that end, work should now begin on an international instrument against corruption. Furthermore, advanced technology, especially information and communication technologies, had too often been used to facilitate organized crime. Steps should be taken at both the national and the international level to counter that aspect of transnational criminality.

13. Many speakers noted that it had not been possible to conclude negotiations on the draft protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. While they recognized the complexity of those negotiations, they believed that it was an instrument that would be indispensable in the fight against transnational organized crime. They looked forward to the finalization of the text in early 2001 and pledged their commitment to engage in the negotiations in the same spirit of cooperation and mutual respect and understanding that had made possible the finalization of the Convention and its two protocols.